



NEWS RELEASE

*Office of the
United States Attorney
for the
District of Nebraska*
Joe W. Stecher

1620 Dodge Street Suite 1400 Omaha NE 68102-1506 (402) 661-3700

September 25, 2009.

United States Attorney Joe Stecher and the United States Secret Service announce the following information for the attention of the media:

Event Triggering this Release: For having committed Wire Fraud in 2004, Mark A. Mehner, was sentenced by the Honorable Lyle E. Strom, Senior United States District Judge, to serve 36 months in prison, which will be followed by a 4 year term of Supervised Release, and to pay a \$100 Special Assessment. A restitution order will be entered next week.

Mehner defrauded Zion Lutheran Church out of approximately \$290,000.00, plus interest. Mehner was the congregation's president in 2004, when he told the church leadership that a member of the congregation, who wished to remain anonymous, had approached him, offering to donate to the church real estate valued at 1.2 to 2 million dollars. In return, the anonymous donor wanted to be reimbursed for the original cost of the land, purportedly \$250,000.00. Upon receiving the \$250,000, the donor was to immediately transfer the donor's property to the church.

The church obtained a loan for \$250,000.00, and a cashier's check in that amount was given to Mehner to give to the donor. Instead, Mehner deposited the check into a banking account he had opened the day before, and the proceeds were spent by Mehner on personal expenses over the next year. There never was a transfer of land to the church, but Mehner continued to maintain the land was to be donated and talked the church into fronting additional monies to cover "unexpected" costs which had supposedly prevented the land transfer from being accomplished, and also to cover closing costs and other fees, which brought the church's financial loss up to approximately \$290,000.00, plus interest.

Name of Defendant: Mark A. Mehner

AKA: n/a

Age: 48

City of residence: Elkhorn, Nebraska

Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty (A CHARGE is merely an accusation and every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty): Wire Fraud, up to 30 years of imprisonment, up to a \$1,000,000 fine, or both imprisonment and fine, up to 5 years of supervised release and a \$100 special assessment.

Specific Location of Alleged Crime: Omaha, Nebraska

Location of Arrest: Omaha, Nebraska

Relevant Dates:

Date of Alleged Crime: Beginning on or about September 27, 2004, and continuing until October 11, 2005.

Federal Arrest Date: February 26, 2007

Date Complaint Issued: n/a

Indictment Returned Date: February 22, 2007

Initial Appearance Date: February 27, 2007

Plea or Trial and Date(s): July 6, 2009

Sentencing Date: September 25, 2009

Next Court Hearing Type and Date: n/a

Assigned Magistrate Judge: The Honorable F. A. Gossett

Released from Custody: February 27, 2007

In Continuous Custody Since: n/a

Assigned District Court Judge: The Honorable Lyle E. Strom

Initials of Assigned AUSA/Preparer of THIS Release: MDW